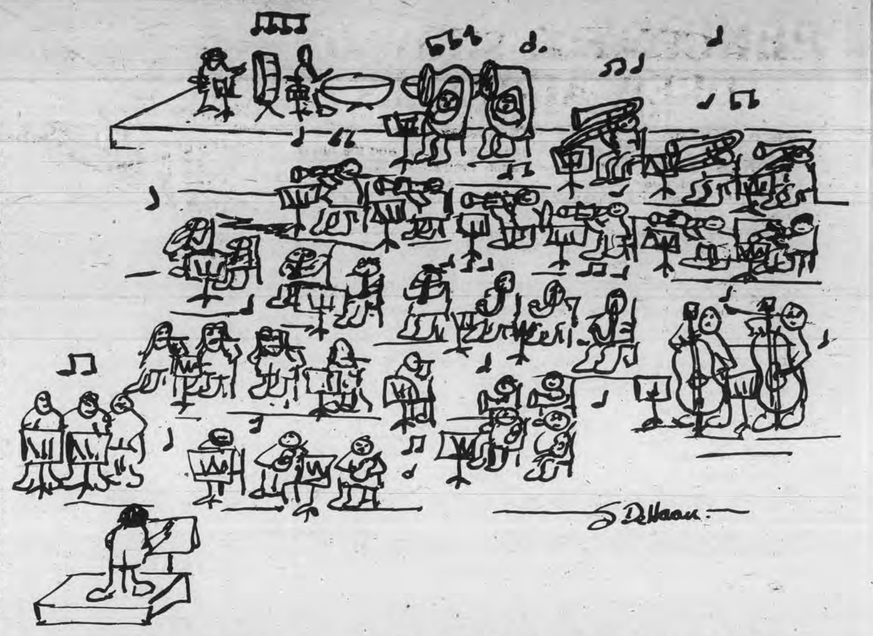
Broadway At Its Best



by Evelyn Harris

Although the price of a Broadway show ticket is now exorbitant, Broadway consistently offers the finest theater entertainment in the New York area. Recently, I had the privilege of seeing *Children of a Lesser God;* a play of superior quality. The serious subject matter that the script deals with makes the play not only entertaining but, a consciousness-raising experience as well.

The play is about the deaf and hearing-impaired. Mr. James Leeds, the protagonist, is a speech therapist in a school for the deaf. Soon after the play opens, Leeds falls in love with one of his students, Sara, and marries her. Sara was born deaf. The motif of the play is the struggle for communication between the two. Although James speaks Sara's language (hand signing), he wants Sara to speak his. By speaking aloud, Sara would enter the "hearing world." Sara adamantly upholds her belief in the uniqueness of a deaf person's language. She argues indefatigably for the legitimacy of her own language. Why must she attempt to utter sounds she has never heard?

In Leed's desperate struggle to break the silence, he forces Sara to scream — her futile attempt at speech. The crude, piercing, incoherent sounds jolt the audience into the realization that Sara can never enter the "hearing world" just as James is not privy to her silence. The play's ending offers compassion and understanding as a solution. With love, the possibility exists that James and Sara can bring the other into his/her own distinct world to the extent that human limitations allow.

The motif of the play also suggests the deficiency in all language. Language renders each man handicapped. The director espouses that compassion, patience, love, and understanding are the key elements necessary to achieve true communication. The play makes the audience laugh and cry but, most importantly, makes them think.

David Ackroyd (James Leeds) and Elizabeth Quinn (Sara Norman), under the superb direction of Gordon Davidson, give an absolutely flawless performance. They, indeed, uphold Broadway's tradition of brilliant theater. The entire cast are actors from the Los Angeles Theater for the Deaf.

Colonial Symphony To Perform Beethoven's 9th

The Colonial Symphony will present its thirtieth anniversary concert on Wednesday, April 8, at 8:30 p.m. at the Madison Junior School, Main Street, Madison, N.J. The program will include Hyperprism by Edgar Varese and will feature Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Opus 125. The choirs from St. Peter's Church and the Presbyterian Church of Morristown will perform with the orchestra.

Soloists for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony will include Eleanor Bergquist, soprano; Jane Bunnell, alto; Thomas Hageman, tenor; and Irwin Dinsen, bass. Richard Morgan of Morristown directs the St. Peter's Church Choir. He received his B.A., as well as a Master's degree in Music, from Yale University. Besides directing the choir Morgan is a concert musician. Dwight Menard, who is the Director of Music at the Presbyterian Church, received a B.A. from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a Master's degree in Mksic from Northwestern. He is a resident of Caldwell and also performs on piano and organ.

Paul Zukofsky, Musical Director and Conductor of the Colonial Symphony, in discussing the program, states that there is a similarity between the two selections. Beethoven, becoming dissatisfied with the size of earlier orchestras, added two horns, a piccolo, percussion, a contra bassoon, and finally a chorus. This transformation marked the change from the period of the classical orchestra into the era of the great romantic orchestra. The Hyperprism contains a similar emotional and psychological struggle in Varese's efforts to break out of the sonic world in which he grew up. Both compositions herald the new and indicate a developmental milestone in the history of music.

The Colonial Symphony Guild will sponsor a pre-concert lecture on April 7 at 9:30 a.m. at the Drew University Student Center. Dr. Lydia Hailparn, Professor of Music at Drew, will present excerpts from both selections.

The Colonial Symphony is partially funded by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Arts and by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, over and above the support from its generous patrons, contributors and corporate donors.

Tickets for the April 8th concert may be purchased at the door for $7.00; $3.50 for students and seniors. For further information call 201-377-1310.

Mrs. George L. Shinn
Publicity Chairman, 201-377-7902

Conference: PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW

Sat. April 4, 1981, the Women's Caucus for Art/New Jersey and the Art Department of Drew University will hold a day-long conference on Performance Art, an exciting field of contemporary art that has received little attention in New Jersey to date. The conference will take place in the Great Hall at Drew, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

In the past few years, Performance Art has been recognized as a vital new form in the visual arts. Performance Art is a singular multimedia event shared by audience and artist. This conference will make it possible for New Jersey artists, art educators, and the interested public to acquaint themselves with the history of this important development in Art. DEBORAH PERLBERG, JEFF WAY, and MARTHA WILSON are the invited performers and panelists. Each will make a unique contribution from their backgrounds in performance, criticism, and video. DEBORAH PERLBERG is a critic who has written feature articles and interviews with contemporary artists and performers, as well as monthly reviews of the arts for *Artforum* magazine. She has also written, produced, and directed video productions shown on cable television and at film and video festivals. Her work on Performance Art includes an article in the January 1980 *Artforum* on the December 1979 performance of "Dance" Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass, and Sol Lewitt, and videotapes of artists' performances in the Anthology Film Archives at the Holly Solomon Gallery.

JEFF WAY is a painter and performance artist who has presented his "Transformation Performance" in such diverse places as a barn near Putney, Vermont; the U.S. Customs House and the New Museum in New York City; a public square in Vail, Colorado, and the downtown shopping mall in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. A member of the Visiting Artists Collaborative, he has lectured widely on Performance Art.

MARTHA WILSON is the founder and Executive Director of Franklin Furnace, an archives for multiple-edition artists' book works, and a showcase for contemporary art exhibitions and performances. She is also a performance artist, and has performed at many New York performance spaces, as well as at an international performance festival in Rome.

The conference will be divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with the morning devoted to the history of Performance Art, and performances by JEFF WAY and MARTHA WILSON in the afternoon. A videotape of a performance by THEODORA SKIPTARES will also be screened in the afternoon.

The afternoon will end with a reception in the Drew University Art Gallery for the Women's Caucus for Art/New Jersey exhibition *Sewn, Woven, and Knotted,* an exhibition of work by New Jersey women artists. The public is invited to attend both the conference and the reception. The registration fee for the conference is $5. For further information, contact Pat Morris, WCA/NJ President (201) 359-4243.

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HIT COMEDY SHOW ON DREW AIRWAVES

by Mark Waldstein

JUST LISTEN TO THIS! Live recording tonight, Friday April 3rd, at 8:00 P.M. in the Attic Theatre. Free.

What *is* "Just Listen to This!" anyway? Sure, you've seen the posters; maybe you've heard someone talking about it. So, what is it? Well, it's the story of a hapless college student whose RA wants to conquer the world with his secret underground cloning laboratory. It's a game show for people who want to kill themselves in new, creative ways. It's the tale of a beautiful young girl who has a duck growing inside her head, and of the male nurse who falls tragically in love with her.

"Just Listen to This!" is an original comedy show designed specifically for radio. It is written and performed entirely by a daring group of students (you may even know one!) just for the fun of it—and the fun is catching on. Recorded before a live audience for later broadcast on WMNJ, the show is already in its third semester on the air, and has gained a steady following of loyal fans. More and more people are tuning in to hear the exciting adventures of "Undercover Kitty" and "Aborigine Doctor," the horror of "Jamaica Station," and the fun of "Family Freud."

At a time when $40 million-dollar movies are falling on their faces, here is a show which allows its audience members to picture, in their own minds, all sorts of incredible characters and situations—simply from the spoken word, some unusual sound effects, and the listener's imagination.

"Just Listen to This!" spoofs soap operas, game shows, and commercials; college life and horror movies; sports and politics. It's a show that's not afraid to take a pot shot at President Reagan, President Hardin, *or* Brooke Shields—just for fun. It's got something for everybody. Come and hear it for yourself! This month's edition is being recorded tonight, Friday April 3rd, at 8:00 P.M. in the Attic Theatre (3rd floor, Hall of Science). Admission is free—just drop by for a half-hour of laughter. Or, be sure to tune in to WMNJ on Monday night, April 6th, at 8:30 P.M. And mark the next recording date on your calendar: Thursday, May 7th, again in the Attic.

Will Dirk be able to thwart the evil plans of Helga and Wolfgang, and make the Y.U. campus safe again? Find out tonight!

American Pop

by John Schnall

Those reviewers who don't praise all aspects of Ralph Badshi's new animated film *American Pop* seem to agree on its flaws. The general critical opinion is that the animation is beyond fault, but elements of the story, (the symbolic downfall of music), are too pretentious, the characters are playing too many personalities, and there is too much vulgarity and horror for an animation. I happen to agree with these critics that the film is disappointing, but I feel the problem is in the animation and its use, which are often hurting a perfectly good film. It may seem unusual for a critic in the Acorn to contradict just about every critic like this, but I think I can support my argument.

The average viewer might call me crazy for criticizing the animation in *American Pop,* as it seems incredibly lifelike. Those who know a bit about animation, however, know that the reason it seems so real is that it is, for the most part, traced from live film. Bakshi is the undisputed master of rotoscoping, which is the process of tracing films of live actors, frame by frame, to make the drawings used to create animations. Rotoscoping can be used in some very innovative ways, by stylizing and distorting the characters, but for some reason Bakshi chose not to. The result is an animation that could have been done live. If an innovative animater were to spend years rotoscoping an animated version of *Citizen Kane,* we'd still prefer the original, as animation adds nothing to the film. In fact, the lack of reality inherent in animation would hurt the film. Of course, animation does have its place, and could have been used well in *American Pop.* For example, there is a filmed representation of an acid trip in one part of the film. Animation is the freest possible form of film, and is probably the best for representing an acid trip (the rotoscope "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" scene in *Yellow Submarine* is a good example of this, and of stylized rotoscoping). Bakshi, on the other hand, uses live film of distorted faces for this sequence. The animated characters in the film never do anything their live counterparts couldn't, and this causes us to leave the theater marveling at the techniques, but wondering why they bothered.

The use of animation is probably what led so many to criticize the story's overtones and its earthiness. The average viewer associates animation only with Mickey Mouse and other adorable creatures. This is unfortunate. What Bakshi is trying to tell us is that animation need not be tame kid stuff, but can be just as good a glimpse into the world's cruelties as live film. Reviewers brought up on Sunday morning cartoons have trouble seeing this, and call the film vulgar, a word they would never use for a live film as tame as this. While such scenes as the death of a young boy's mother in an explosion are cruel, they are effective because of their cruelty, and are nothing more than signs that Bakshi takes filmmaking seriously. The decline of music toward drugs and commercialism which the film seems to represent wouldn't seem pretentious if we didn't associate animation with shallow entertainment. The only semi-valid complaint I can see about the film is that the characters represent too many different people at the same time. While this may annoy some, it is necessary convention of a film which tries to trace the history of American pop music through so few main characters. Even though I find fault in the use of animation in *American Pop,* I feel it is worth seeing, if for no other reason, so that viewers brought up on child-oriented cartoons can see an adult-level animation.

Stephen Pace

by Janet M. Gorzegno

"There is no such thing as an ugly color or shape. It's all relative. It's just how they're arranged." This statement exemplifies Stephen Pace's optimistic approach to his art. In fact, Pace points out that, "I only paint when I'm in a good mood." This would explain the fresh, happy quality of his work. Furthermore, Pace intends for his paintings to be enjoyed by all for their pleasing aesthetic value, not only by specially trained art critics or historians. Pace once explained to journalist Karen Alexis, "I've never wanted to be labled. I want to be part of the whole world. I never have wanted to be part of what's in fashion."

Pace was classified by critics in the 1950's as an abstract expressionist. Pace began abstract painting in Mexico, before the term abstract expressionism was even coined. Due to the discomfort he felt in the streets of Mexico in 1946, however, it was difficult for Pace to set up his easel in public and paint the figures he saw before him. It was also difficult to find models. Therefore, he painted his figures from memory from inside his studio. At this point, Pace's figures became anonymous in that they began to dissolve into components of color and shape. The movement of his painting towards abstraction disturbed Pace. It was only until he went to New York that he realized that his "figures didn't have to look like anyone." He was highly praised for his abstract paintings because by this time, abstract expressionism was under way as a movement in the art world.

About ten years later in 1961, Pace's work went through another change. Figures in his paintings began to emerge once again, and instead of trying to suppress them, Pace let them come out. There have been figures in his works ever since. Almost always female, these figures suggest a strong influence by Matisse. Journalist B. Forgey writes, "The nude female model has a central place in Pace's work, symbolically and actually. She is always big and always at ease, sexually attractive and an object of continuous, respectful and fundamentally serene contemplation. Thus, Pace, as did Matisse, maintains links to the academic practice of drawing from the nude model, and like Matisse, he manages to give fresh life to the old tradition."

Pace himself appears to be a very happy man who truly enjoys life. In his painting, there is a deliberate attempt to reflect this optimistic outlook on life. In a description of one of his self portraits, Pace says the painting conveys the message, "I'm having a wonderful experience; wish you were here." He believes that as an artist he must "block out grief in order to allow joyous feelings to come through."

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